Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-10. (Cancelled)

11. (Currently Amended) A stent delivery system comprising:

a catheter, the catheter having an inner shaft and a retractable sheath, the inner shaft having at least one grip member engaged ~~thereto~~ to a portion of the inner shaft nearer a distal end of the inner shaft than a proximal end of the inner shaft, the at least one grip member comprising a body region and a hub region, the body region being tapered from a first end to a second end, the hub region being adjacent to the first end of the body region, an outer diameter of the hub region being greater than an outer diameter of the first end of the body region; and

a stent, the stent being expandable from an unexpanded state to an expanded state, in the unexpanded state, at least a portion of the stent being disposed about a portion of the inner shaft and engaged to at least a portion of the body region of the at least one grip and the hub region of the at least one grip member being positioned ~~proximal to~~ between the stent and the proximal end of the inner shaft, in the unexpanded state, the retractable sheath overlying the stent, wherein the stent expands to the expanded state when the retractable sheath is retracted off of the stent,

wherein~~, during use,~~ the grip member is configured so that the stent directly contacts the hub region when the sheath is retracted.

12. (Original) The stent delivery system of claim 11 wherein the stent comprises a plurality of struts.

13. (Original) The stent delivery system of claim 12 wherein the catheter exerts a longitudinal force upon individual struts of the stent when the sheath is retracted from about the stent, the at least one grip member reducing the longitudinal force the catheter exerts on the individual struts.

14-15. (Cancelled)

16. (Previously Presented) The stent delivery system of claim 11 wherein the at least one grip member comprises a first grip member and a second grip member, an end of the body region of the first grip member being substantially adjacent to an end of the body region of the second grip member.

17. (Original) The stent delivery system of claim 16 wherein the stent comprises a first end portion, a second end portion and a body portion therebetween, in the unexpanded state the first end portion of the stent being engaged to at least a portion of the body region of the first grip member, and the second end portion of the stent being engaged to at least a portion of the body region of the second grip member.

18. (Previously Presented) The stent delivery system of claim 17 wherein, in the unexpanded state, the body portion of the stent overlies the end of the body region of the first grip member and the end of the body region of the second grip member.

19. (Previously Presented) The stent delivery system of claim 11 wherein the at least a portion of the body region of the at least one grip member has a hardness of about 60 to about 90 as measured on the Shore A hardness scale.

20. (Previously Presented) The stent delivery system of claim 11 wherein the at least a portion of the body region of the at least one grip member has a hardness of about 70 to about 90 as measured on the Shore A hardness scale.

21. (Previously Presented) The stent delivery system of claim 11 wherein the at least a portion of the body region of the at least one grip member is constructed from at least one material of the group consisting of: polyether ester, polyether block amides, PELLETHANE, TECOTHANE, polyurethane, rubber foam, silicon and any combination there of.

22. (Previously Presented) The stent delivery system of claim 11 wherein the at least a portion of the body region of the at least one grip member is radiopaque.

23. (Currently Amended) A method, comprising:

providing a grip between a catheter shaft and an outer sheath, the grip being nearer a distal end of the catheter shaft than a proximal end of the catheter shaft, the grip comprising a body region and a hub region, the body region being tapered from a first end to a second end, the hub region being adjacent to the first end of the body region, an outer diameter of the hub region being greater than an outer diameter of the first end of the body region;

providing a stent between the body region of the grip and the outer sheath, the hub region of the grip being positioned ~~proximal to~~ between the stent and the proximal end of the catheter shaft; and

retracting the outer sheath relative to the catheter shaft, wherein the stent directly contacts the hub region when the outer sheath is retracted.

24. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23 further comprising engaging at least a portion of the stent in an unexpanded state to at least a portion of the body region of the grip.

25. (Cancelled)

26. (Previously Presented) The stent delivery system of claim 11, wherein the at least one grip member is at least partially constructed from a polymeric material.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23, wherein the grip is at least partially constructed from a polymeric material.

28. (Cancelled)

29. (Previously Presented) The stent delivery system of claim 11, wherein the outer diameter of the hub region is greater than an outer diameter of the stent when the stent is in its unexpanded state.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 23, wherein the outer diameter of the hub region is greater than an outer diameter of the stent when the stent is in an unexpanded state.

31-34. (Cancelled)